

Value and Order Outline

1st Corinthians 11:1-16

- I. Our responsibility in interpreting the Bible (especially difficult passages!)
 - A. Distinguish between time/era/geographical context to timeless universal principles.
 - B. Careful definitions of words.
 - C. Examples throughout history:
 - 1. Church dress in the 1950's-60's.
 - D. The danger in interpreting a passage with preconceived ideas and prejudices.
 - 1. (ex.) The erroneous idea that the apostle Paul and Christianity values men over women.
- II. Value and order.
 - A. God created all men and women equal in value— value is the importance, worth, or usefulness of something.
 - B. God created the world with order, with order comes authority.
 - 1. (ex.) In any viable organization there must be a hierarchy of roles—authority.
- III. The Corinthian church situation.
 - A. Syncretism—the blending of the Christian faith with pagan religion and values.
 - B. (ex.) The prominence of the worship of Dionysus.
 - 1. The elite embraced the sexual perversions of Dionysus to confront and tear down the cultural norms of the day—a symbol of elite-ness.
 - 2. Our similar problem—“over-contextualization”—the church embraces culture to the extent that culture has more influence on the church than the church does on culture.
 - C. A misinterpreted verse: Galatians 3:28—“... *there is no distinction between man and woman...*”
 - D. The immediate problem Paul is addressing here—He doesn't want ANYTHING to distract from the worship of God
- IV. Principles.

- A. Principle—Sexual differences between men and women are a part of God’s order in creation, and they should never obscure public worship.
- B. Principle—EVERYBODY HAS A HEAD—and we are to bring glory to that head.
 - 1. Christ is the head of every man.
 - 2. Man is the head of a woman.
 - a. Headship—assumes authority and responsibility— not a status of value.
 - b. Man and woman—Husband and wife.
 - Ephesians 5
 - 3. God is the head of Christ—Both equal, different roles.
- C. Principle—How you present yourself either honors or shames your head.

What one does or doesn’t put on one’s physical head either honors or shames one’s spiritual head.

- 1. What a woman wears on her head will reflect honor or shame on her husband.
- 2. What a man puts on his head reflects honor or shame on Jesus Christ.
- 3. Cultural reasons.
 - a. Head covering for a woman is a “*symbol of authority*”.
- D. Principle—Consider what is “natural” in how you represent your head.
 - 1. “Natural”—the cultural norms of the day—*What would be natural in that culture at that time, in that era.*
 - 2. What is “natural” changes over time.
- V. Other considerations.
 - A. Both men and women can pray and “prophesy” in public worship (Verse 5).
 - B. In the creation of man and woman, God made them with distinct roles but equal (Verses 7-10).
- VI. “*Don’t like what you just heard?...there’s nothing more I can tell you!*” (Verse 16)

Value and Order Pastoral Notes

1st Corinthians 11:1-16

Ten days ago we received an email from a very respectful but inquiring person who was in the process of learning about the churches here in Moscow... apparently he knew of some people who were moving here and he wanted to help them locate a “good” church...a church that fit their needs...

So this individual did what you do now... he got on line and checked out the websites of the Moscow churches including ours... as he was checking us out... he landed on our staff page... he landed on our youth pastor’s picture and that is what prompted his cordial email.

In fact... Listen to his actual email: *Hi. Thanks for what you are doing in Moscow. I have people moving there. I apologize for the direct nature of my question, but as I am asked about recommending churches, I looked through your staff. I was wondering how you reconcile 1 Corinthians 11:14 with the look of your Youth Pastor. That is a genuine question and not an attack. Thanks for your consideration as I try to help people find a church.*

First of all... I truly appreciate the kind spirit of his question... but how timely was his inquiry!...and it reveals that today, 2000 years after this letter was written... we wrestle with Paul’s instructions...especially the context of it and its application for today.... Fortunately for me I had already been entrenched in study over this very controversial and often misunderstood passage.

This is one of those passages that I pull out a classic verse that I usually pull out at times like this... 2nd Timothy 3:16... you should know it by heart... **16 All Scripture is inspired by God and beneficial for teaching, for rebuke, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man or woman of God may be fully capable, equipped for every good work.**

I pull that out because one might read this passage and wonder what it has to do with us in our day?... this is the beauty of expository preaching!... where, the way we do it, going verse by verse through entire books of the Bible...we do not, I DO NOT, have the option of skipping over certain difficult passages...without a host of emails calling me a chicken.

Where the “topical” preacher... who gets to “choose” the topic HE wants to preach on each week... the topic he might think... would be the most relevant if not entertaining for his congregation...HE WOULD NEVER CHOOSE 1st Corinthians 11:1-16! [maybe John 14:14 **If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.**]

This morning will be a little different...there’s a tension between the...time/era/geographical context and timeless universal principles. In this case... a tension between instructions meant

specifically for the Corinthian church in the first century and the timeless principles meant for all people of all times.

The context is the church at Corinth in the 1st century... What Paul says to them is entrenched in their specific situation...their context.... But for us... are some timeless principles.

One of the takeaways I hope to give away this morning is how careful we must be on handling difficult passages of scripture...though this passage is obviously steeped in a cultural context nearly 2000 years removed from us... making it somewhat difficult for us to apply it to us...our culture today...the greater difficulty is for us to NOT get this wrong....leading us into false conclusions and even false doctrine.

Word definitions are important and challenging as well... we need to get words right...

I say this because this has happened throughout history with this passage... often in my lifetime... in fact... receiving that email is evidence that this is a difficult text... and many have made some I think erroneous conclusion.

Like some of you... who remember the late fifties, early sixties... if you attended any mainline church at that time might remember that all the ladies wore hats in church... my mother dared not go to church head not covered!

And the men all wore suits... for in THAT day..... wearing a suit was respectful to God!

I noticed as we got into the sixties... the hats became smaller and smaller... sometimes just a ribbon or a piece of netting... whether the women of the church knew it or not... that was a direct result of an interpretation of this passage...

Something else that happened in the sixties was the Beatles...who turned many social norms upside down...especially how men fashioned their hair.. they forever changed men's hairstyles... speaking of men

To this very day... men if wearing a cap, or some form of hat... a baseball cap... will take it off before praying for a meal... why?... verse 4... **Every man who has SOMETHING on his head while praying or prophesying shames his head.**

So this passage has stuck.... somewhat.

There are many commentators that say this passage is not about hats or any other garment... that these verses are referring to hair length and hair styles... head coverings here are just styles of wearing hair... for the woman...so then... when worshipping in public is to have their hair up... off their shoulders and faces...

15 but if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her? For her hair is given to her as a covering.

Read verse 6 [explain]

And verse 14 was written to Micah... **does not nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair it is a dishonor to him...**so men...sport short hair....

So... is that what this is all about?... wearing head coverings in church?...hair styles? And hair length?... if the answer is “yes” we can now go home...the instructions are clear....but you know better!

As I mentioned... We must be very careful in how we handle this passage... getting this wrong could send us off in a completely different and wrong world..... all of us will come to this passage with **some preconceived ideas and our own cultural contexts.**

We might be tempted to read Paul’s instructions through our own lens and our own prejudices... many women don’t like this passage.... They don’t like the apostle Paul!!! [if you do still like Paul wait till we get to chapter 14!]

Reading these verses without context could lead to one to think that women are somehow second-class citizens amongst a superior male dominant society....

Nothing could be further from the truth... in fact... just the opposite is true...In the first century Roman and Greek cultures... women WERE second class citizens... they were viewed as chattel... a little higher than the animals... It was Christianity... much of it through the apostle Paul that said “NO!”... “*Woman is equal to man*” in God’s kingdom... Equal in value... and worth... and equal in spiritual blessings...and privileges...

In God’s kingdom there is “*Value*” and “*Order*”... God created us all...man and woman with equal value... **value is the importance, worth, or usefulness of something....**

And God created the world...all of His creation with order... it is ordered so it functions optimally for the His glory and purposes... for there to be order... there must be roles... in any organization we know there must be a hierarchy of roles...There’s ownership... there’s management... there’s production... [expound] if everybody was a manager NOTHING would ever get done!

Viable governments have order... with a hierarchy of roles in order to have order... many people say they dislike authority.... Dislike the idea of roles and hierarchy... but when they purchase something that ends up having a defect... who do they want to talk to?.... somebody who has the authority to give them a refund.... *I want to speak to the manager...* (good luck)

Here's the Corinthian situation:

Situation—Syncretism... The Corinthian church had *blended* aspects of the Christian faith with the practices of the Corinthian culture.... What we will see in the near future is that they messed up the Lord's Supper by making it a drunken, gluttonous feast similar to what they did in their pagan temples... (next week).

We will see they messed up the practice of spiritual gifts...they confused prophesy and tongues with practices in the pagan temples as they worshipped idol gods...we just came out of the problem of participating in the eating of sacrificed meat in the pagan temples...

For cultural background... let me give you this... Corinth was steeped in this... and most likely it had a influence on the church... One of the most prolific, prominent religions in 1st century Corinth was the worship of Dionysus... the Greek god of wine...there are many stories surrounding Dionysus... but Euripides and Seneca agree on this: Dionysus was the offspring of Zeus's sexual relationship with Semele, a human female,...

It was this adulterous relationship that angered Zeus's wife Hera.... Hera, in her rage decided she would kill the offspring...Dionysus... the results of this adulterous affair Dionysus... to protect Dionysus from death... his attendants, those who raised him... disguised him as a female.

He doused himself in perfume like a woman... he dressed like a woman... and he grew his hair out long like a woman...he walked with a female gate and he imitated a woman by speaking with a female voice.

The worshippers of Dionysus described him as being "androgenous"... bisexual... both male and female anatomically... and in his preferences... they would celebrate Dionysus gender confusion by playing out gender reversal in their own lives...this was rampant in upper Corinthian society... [parties, temple orgies...]

Worshippers of Dionysus.... Men would wear women's clothing and sport long hair... and the women often shaved their heads and wore men's clothing...we know about this through archeological finds in Corinth of vases intricately painted with scenes of worshippers worshipping Dionysus....

Some of these paintings show that the women went to extreme measures to make them anatomically like a male... that is the context the church existed in....battling with syncretism... the blending of Corinthian culture and the Christian faith.

This is our problem today... we call it "over-contextualization"... when the blending of our culture with our Christianity goes too far and the church begins to look more like the culture than it does the bride of Christ.

About culture in general, Corinth and us specifically... all cultures have cultural norms...the perceived informal, mostly unwritten, rules that define acceptable and appropriate actions. within

a given group or community.... guiding human behavior... They consist of what we do, what we believe, others do, and what we believe others approve of.

We have already seen that the Corinthian culture is known for its decadence... that's why some call this letter of Paul's 1st Corinthians... for the most part... in any culture norms are "respectable"... there usually is a loud minority... that pushes, breaks and even demolishes a culture's norms... they are so loud that that's all anyone hears!

But the majority lives within the acceptable social norms... there are things you can do that will either bring you shame or honor..... this is the situation here...

One by one the apostle Paul is bringing them back out of their pagan inclinations that they had wandered back into... and now he addresses a serious problem which is NOT so much about head coverings and length of hair... but something much greater and serious... our challenge is to be able to differentiate between what is cultural... teaching limited to the Corinthian culture... and universal Principles.... That are directed to all people of all times. ...

Christianity gets into the city of Corinth through the missionary efforts of Paul... Paul comes to Corinth... and he preaches to them what he preached in Galatia... **there is neither male nor female... for you are all one in Christ...**

This is radical!.... and apparently some of the women in the Corinthian church were taking liberty with this idea... and they started to discard some of their social norms... *since there is no difference between men and women.... I don't have to act or look like a woman...*

[The norms have been crashing with the worship of Dionysus anyway]

There is such a correlation with our culture today... I don't have to tell you there is a major blending or erasing of gender differences today... much of the evangelical church is doing exactly what was starting to happen in the Corinthian church...

Listen to the *pastoresses* that are in the liberal churches today and they use Galatians 3:28 for support of gender dismantling... **there is neither male nor female...**

Of course... put Galatians 3:28 in context... the believers of Christ... men and women alike... not just men... but women as well... (29) are all of Abraham's seed... and equal heirs of the Abrahamic promise... (through Christ we will all become His children)... it has NOTHING to do with eliminating distinctions between men and women!

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is no male and female for you are all ONE in Christ.... YOU ARE ALL THE SAME VALUE ... the same spiritual status...

The immediate problem Paul is addressing here... He doesn't want ANYTHING to distract from the worship of God...specifically he's addressing public worship... in that the church comes together corporately to worship together...

He doesn't want ANYTHING to draw attention away from Almighty God..... but there apparently are some distractions... mostly from the women...but men are not innocent here either...

Principle—SEXUAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN ARE A PART OF GOD'S ORDER IN CREATION—AND THEY SHOULD NOT OBSCURE PUBLIC WORSHIP.....let's go through it carefully:

Verse 1 it is agreed on should have been included at the end of chapter ten... remember our chapters and verses were invented in 1560.... With the Geneva Bible... they got this one wrong... so chapter eleven should begin with verse 2.

Paul is smart... he knows that before he reprimands he should first praise... all of us would be better if we followed his example:

Read verse 2

Traditions could best be interpreted “precepts”... “doctrine”.

Then he gives us a “but”... what follows the “but” we could say is **the basic premise of the entire passage**... the problem is that some women and men are distracting the worship in the public worship service which is shaming themselves **and their head!**.... The principle.... Or basic premise is a matter of “headship”....headship.... and bringing glory to the head...rather than shame.

Remember Corinth is a “Shame/Honor” culture...the way you navigated through the Corinthian culture was to avoid getting shamed.... But rather be honored...for what you do... all things.... The principle here for all of us is.... Corinthian and Moscowvite...

Principle—EVERYBODY HAS A HEAD... and we are to bring glory to that head.

Read verse 3

This is ORDER.... Not VALUE... these are “roles” not levels of worth.... Three headships...

1. Christ is the head of every man...

2. Man is the head of a woman....by the way... “man” and “woman” here is a minefield... some have interpreted this meaning that ALL men are over ALL women... in other words... All women must be submissive to ALL men.... see the danger?

Three words we need to consider... *what is a head?*... *what is a man?*... and the question some struggle with today.... *What is a woman?*... how these are defined directs where this passage goes...

What is a head? Headship...I don't think we can escape the idea that headship has the idea of authority... that rubs people wrong in our culture... so there are attempts to lessen that meaning... one suggested that head here is like the head of a river... the head is only a location...a position... *the prominent part of the river*... [a river flowing from a lake—lake = head]...water is water....

Headship definitely assumes responsibility... responsibility assumes having authority... it all began in creation...

Read verses 8-9...10

Genesis 3... we could say the woman... Eve usurped Adam's responsibility and hence his leadership...I propose Adam failed at even trying to lead....but Adam was given the responsibility from God to manage the garden... to not eat from the forbidden fruit...

He ate the forbidden fruit....AND... WHO DID GOD GO AFTER?.... Genesis three says God called after the man!...**and the Lord called to the man**...Adam...why Adam?.... because Adam was responsible...he was supposed to be the leader....He had authority... but Adam blames his helper! *The woman YOU gave to me*....

So headship carries with it authority and responsibility over someone... Paul's point here is not Lordship over someone... and it is not a value judgement, man more valuable than woman....man is responsible to lead over the woman...and the woman is to yield to his leading... God's order.

What is "man" ... what is woman?... is it ALL men?...ALL women?... all men are over all women?....some think so... in a positional sense...and also in the Christian context... in the family...father, brother..... in marriage... in the church... the elders/pastor...

Both words most of the time... especially the Greek word for woman here is *gune* (gun-nee) which is usually translated as "wife" when used next to "man"... (**verse 3 in NASB... Legacy and NIV**)

"Man" is often translated as "husband" as well... this also goes along with Paul's other writings concerning Man and Woman... when man is mentioned with woman it usually is husband and wife.

In Ephesians 5:22...Paul tells the wife **to be subject TO HER OWN husband... as to the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body**

But as the church is subject to Christ, ORDER... so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in EVERYTHING.... I think that's pretty clear... headship is authority over... it is positional... it carries with it great responsibility... the husband is to be the head of the wife... and that is because CHRIST is HIS HEAD

Don't go away thinking this is a bad deal for the woman... Paul defines headship for the husband in Ephesians 5:25... **Husbands love your wives like Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her...** what's headship look like?.... sacrificial love!...voluntary servanthood (foot washing). what woman wouldn't want that headship?

There is a spiritual leading the man is responsible for as the head of the woman... look what happens in male headship... when the husband loves his wife like Christ loved His bride the church:

26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. 28 So husbands also ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; 29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church,

His point though is that ALL are under headship...**Christ is the head of every man.... Man is the head of every woman....** And

3. God is the head of Christ

Not about inequality through authority... God and Jesus are equal... but their roles are different... Christ willingly placed Himself under God the Father's submission....Everyone has a head.... now... Paul gets to their cultural problem....

Principle—How you present yourself either honors or shames your head.

Read verses 4-5

This is specific to the Corinthian culture... in the Corinthian culture...specifically the Corinthian church **in that culture... what one does or doesn't put on one's physical head either honors or shames one's spiritual head.** The issue is not hair or a hat... it is honor or shame to the head

What the woman wears on her head will reflect shame or honor on her husband.... What man puts on his head reflects shame or honor on Christ.... This is important... the behavior of the woman reflects on the man...who as her head...is representative of her.... As her head.

So what she does has ramifications on her husband.... same goes to the man in relation to Christ...

Now... there's arguments all over the Christian universe as to what all the details to this really means... nobody is in agreement on the details... some say this is hairstyles... some say hats... some say veils... everybody has a theory as to why head coverings matter in the first place.

That is why some people STILL wear head coverings in church today!...but there are some clues that we should look at...

In the Corinthian culture... a man was to wear a head covering while visiting the pagan temples in Corinth,...so... to wear a head covering in the presence of the one true God while publically worshipping Him would dishonor to God...to cover one's head in worship would evoke a clear association with pagan devotion....

Some look to 2nd Corinthians 3 that reveals Paul's understanding that **"We are not like Moses who put a veil over his face... for having turned to the Lord... the veil is removed..."**

In Exodus 34... Moses decided to wear a veil in the presence of the people.... but when he went into the presence of the Lord... he removed the veil... so what did Paul say hundreds of years later after Christ?... **We all with unveiled faces...**

There's more clarity with the woman...if her head is uncovered... she shames her head... she shames her husband...

1. In that culture... there had to be a clear distinction between a man and a woman... a woman would have long hair... a man would have short hair... yes... there were the elite outliers... challenging these norms.

Paul recognized that the norms of that society were beginning to break down... especially among the elite who were taking their cues from Dionysus and began eliminating gender distinctions.

2. If a woman was caught in adultery... they would shave her head (**Read Verse 5**)... strip off her clothes and throw her out on the streets... no respectable man would ever have anything to do with her... she brought dishonor to her head....her husband.

3. We don't know for sure if we're talking about hats or putting their hair up on their heads... we do know from verse 10 that whatever she placed on the top of her head was a **"symbol of authority"**.... A symbol she was under a headship.....but also... that she had authority over her physical head... because how she presented her physical head meant everything in that culture.

This would tell all the guys in town to buzz off!... but if she let her hair down.... If she cut her hair... it would tell all the guys to "come on over!"... all this is a 1st century cultural norm...hats and hair styles changed many times over the years between then and now.

But what has not changed is the fact that there is a way to present yourself in a manner that honors or dishonors your head....headship....

Principle—Consider what is “natural” in how you represent your head....what does that mean? we get a clue on that in verse 14... Micah’s verse...

Read verse 14

We could point back to Judges and read where a man under the Nazarite vow would dishonor God if he DID cut his hair....What about “Natural”?

If nature would takes its course, what would happen?... eventually men’s hair would be as long as women’s... that’s “natural” [except for mine!].... the fact is... in the Corinthian culture the women wore their hair long.... And the men short..... so that’s not “nature”...you had to clip nature.....

Natural here means what would be natural in that day and time... “cultural customs” or “cultural norms”.... What would be “normal, natural for those living in that culture at that time...what would bring shame and what would bring honor. In every culture...**there is a way you can present yourself that will honor or dishonor your head... you need to think about that...every day!**

So... what “nature” would prescribe in *that* culture... was that in general... men would at a minimum feel very uncomfortable having hair that made him look like a woman...likely... a man would be very “ashamed” to look like a woman.

[Shame culture]

What is “natural” within a culture never stays the same... we see that in our own culture:

50’s- early ... 60’s... for men crew cuts...flat tops...a little brylcream...

60’s-80’s... ***Gimme a head with hair...Long, beautiful hair...Shining, gleaming...Streaming, flaxen, waxen...Give me down to there (hair)...Shoulder length or longer (hair)...Here, baby, there, mama..Everywhere, daddy, daddy...Hair (hair, hair, hair, hair, hair)***

Grow it, show it...Long as I can grow it...My hair

Hair was no longer gender identification!... it said something else!

Now?...2023..... GOOD GRIEF!...

Bottom line... the cultural symbols of femininity and masculinity change over time...A few years ago... Paul might have written if living in America... *Doesn’t nature teach you that a man should not wear a dress and heels?*

I have no idea what he would write today!.... I think he would have a severe case of writers block!... what can you say when all distinctions have been erased including the basis of those distinctions.... The idea of a woman and a man being erased!!!!

The point is...

Principle— we are to honor our heads with how we present ourselves... honor and dishonor are reflected by the norms of the day... and of the culture...

Wives... how you dress... how you present yourself in public... says a lot about you...and your “head”.... Your relationship with your husband.... And your relationship with Jesus Christ!

Men... how you present yourself.... How you dress.... IT’S NOT ALL ABOUT YOU...your independence...your autonomy.... But it reveals much about you and your relationship to your head... Jesus Christ.

[our day pushes the idea that *I am mine, I can do anything I want...how I look is how I look*...We are autonomous beings... which means 'self-legislation' or 'self-governance.... It’s about me... ' the Christian is not to think like that...]

- **Would you be considered offensive by your head?** (men and women)
- **Would you be distracting from public worship in how you present yourself?**
- **Would you actually be honoring your head with how you present yourself?**

Not just being dishonorable... but not neutral either... do you honor your head?

Another thing not to miss.... Back up to verse 5 again...**reread verse 5**

Every woman who has her head uncovered while *praying and prophesying*.... The same thing the men were to do in verse 4.... Do you realize what this would have meant in that day?... the woman was to remain quiet when in public... they were to remain quiet even in the presence of their husbands in their own homes unless spoken to!... for the woman, silence was a virtue.

Now... they are praying and prophesying in church!...just like the men!

Just so we aren’t confused about what prophesying is here... as you have guessed... people have argued about that for the last 2000 years...**prophesying is not preaching**.... Don’t want to get into that now... it’s coming!.... Calvin said that prophesying refers to *explaining the mysteries of God for edification for those who hear*.

Telling forth God’s counsel to edify.... ***God speaks to you through His word.... And you share that with others***... man and woman both are to do that in public worship... the only stipulation is to present yourself in a manner that honors your headship.

Paul as he ends his thoughts in this section has emphasized the roles of man and woman... but he closes emphasizing their equality.

Read verses 11-12

Read verses 14-15

Now... *you don't like what you heard this morning?.... can't help ya!... that's all I can say!...*

Read verse 16

Dr. Laura..... *"now go do the right thing"*